

Gender Informed Principles for Homelessness services: Co-produced with women with lived experience of homelessness

DEVELOPED BY

**Fulfilling
Lives in
Islington &
Camden**



LOTTERY FUNDED



Single Homeless Project
Preventing homelessness
Transforming lives

**Relationships are
the basis for
healing. Every
interaction is an
opportunity to be
gender and trauma
informed.**

Honesty and
transparency,
kindness and
decency, warmth
and humour

Offer choice and
control at all
times and work
towards co-
production with
women

Understand and
respond to trauma
as a gendered
experience: VAWG,
child removal, wider
societal inequalities

Avoid
retraumatizing
processes and co-
produce
strengths-based
alternatives

Understand impact
of structural sexism
and organisational
trauma on service
design and delivery.
Recognise and
respond to systemic
challenges.

Recognise and
respond to how
gender-based
discrimination
intersects with
other forms of
identity.

Offer safety through
women only
services, spaces and
relationships... but
understand this is
not for everyone.
Have clear pathways
and support offers
for women in
couples

DEVELOPED BY

**Fulfilling
Lives in
Islington &
Camden**



LOTTERY FUNDED



Single Homeless Project
Preventing homelessness
Transforming lives

Gender and trauma informed principles for women's homelessness provision: Co-produced recommendations

Relationships are the basis for healing. **Every** interaction is an opportunity to be gender and trauma informed.

"Just do it, even if they (the client) tell you to go away, you've got to help them. You really want someone who will stick with you, and still be kind".

For services supporting women experiencing multiple disadvantage, traditional outcome measurements and frameworks do not always capture client journeys meaningfully, or reflect the benefits of the support received. Outcome measurement should also focus on 'soft', relational outcomes, captured in co-produced ways such as client interviews, client case studies, client wellbeing self-assessment tools, etc. See the [Re-thinking Outcomes Guide for services](#) for more information.

Offer choice and control at all times and work towards co-production with women

"Listen to what the women want. The women are telling you what they want."

To counteract the feelings of powerlessness caused and perpetuated by trauma, services should offer women choice and control, in all aspects of a woman's experience of the service. This should include support planning processes, flexible engagement options including outreach approaches for building based services, and environmental factors. Services should also demonstrate a wider commitment to co-production at an organisational level, with a plan to work towards co-producing all key aspects of service design and delivery. See the [Co-Production Toolkit developed by FLIC](#) for more information.

Understand and
respond to trauma
as a gendered
experience: VAWG,
child removal, wider
societal inequalities

*"I've had bad things happen... too many
to name."*

Partnership service models to bridge the gap between the homelessness and VAWG sectors and organisations are highly desirable, and joint working between homelessness, VAWG and specialist women's services is essential if women's needs are to be understood and responded to.

Avoid
retraumatizing
processes and
co-produce
strengths-based
alternatives

*"I can't do paperwork, it makes me
anxious – I was always being asked to
do more paperwork"*

Assessments, support plans, risk assessments, multi-agency client meetings, and all written forms of communication relating to housing services should be re-configured with women with lived experience to ensure that they work for women, do not patronise or retraumatise women, and ensure equity of access to women. All these processes should recognise women's strengths and protective factors, before addressing goals that remain.

Understand impact
of structural sexism
and organisational
trauma on service
design and delivery.
Recognise and
respond to
systemic
challenges.

*"There were services for men, clothes
for men... not for women. They would
always speak to my partner, not to me."*

Gender equality in services should be a central goal, not an "added value". Services, whether they are outreach, hostels, floating support or Housing First, have been predominantly designed for men experiencing homelessness. It is not enough to apportion more of an existing service to women. The design and delivery of all aspects of the service need to be re-imagined and re-configured with women's experiences front and centre. Gender and trauma informed

walk-throughs of existing services can help to identify areas for development. Services also need to push back against wider systemic issues that affect the women they support. Block and barriers can be captured, collated and escalated using the Team Around Me model.

Recognise and respond to how gender-based discrimination intersects with other forms of identity.

“They always say, go to the woman’s group. But what if I don’t fit in at this woman’s group?”

Services need to recognise that gender is just one factor of women’s identities, that women’s experiences are unique, and that gender intersects with many other factors that can marginalise people, including race, sexual orientation, age, disability, class, etc. It is essential that services explore intersectionality in their support of women, and recognise that one service cannot meet the unique needs of every woman. Services should consider language, culture, physical ability etc in their service offers, strive for equity of access and experience, and broker strong partnerships with specialist ‘by and for’ services and organisations to enable women to access external support tailored to their individual needs.

Offer safety through women only services, spaces and relationships... but understand this is not for everyone. Have clear pathways and support offers for women in couples

“I could never get support when I was with a partner, never. He wouldn’t allow it.”

It is essential that women have women’s only spaces to live in/access if that is what they want – this includes women only staff teams, including concierges and night workers. However, services also need to respond to the complex dynamics of women experiencing homelessness when they are in relationships, including where domestic abuse is present within the relationship. Women experiencing homelessness will often form relationships to keep themselves safer on the streets, and lack of provision for couples, as well as the coercive control of perpetrators, can perpetuate women’s homelessness. For examples of innovative thinking and good practice, see Standing Together’s Guidance & recommendations for supported accommodation & Housing First providers responding to perpetrators of domestic abuse accessing their services.



Honesty and
transparency,
kindness and
decency, warmth
and humour

*“I want someone who is kind, someone
to have a laugh with, maybe someone
who has been through things
themselves...someone I can trust.”*

Services should prioritise values-based, relational practice and offer a range of relational support including 121 keywork, group work, peer support, community support. Women should have available to them clear, co-produced processes around how to request a change of keyworker. Recruitment should be co-produced, with an emphasis on relational and values-based skills and attitudes.